

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 701

UNCLAS MOSCOW 3237

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AFSP, APER, UR

SUBJ: POSITION LEVEL

REF: (A) STATE 34506, (B) MOSCOW 1417, (C) 75 MOSCOW 13226,

1. THE EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE FURTHER CONSIDERATION AND REVIEW OF THE POSITION IN QUESTION AND PROVIDES HERewith ADDITIONAL INFORMATION. WE WOULD STRESS THAT THE B&F SECTION IN MOSCOW IS FACED WITH VERY UNUSUAL OBSTACLES INCLUDING LOW LEVEL OF SOVIET ACCOUNTING AND BOOKKEEPING STANDARDS, THE GENERAL ENVIRONMENT AND EARLIER HISTROY OF THE EMBASSY'S APPROACH TO STAFFING. PERHAPS AN EXAMPLE WILL HELP ILLUSTRATE THESE PROBLEMS. TODAY THE USE OF CALCULATORS OR EVEN ADDING MACHINES IS STILL THE EXCEPTION IN THE SOVIET UNION RATHER THAN THE RULE. ABACUSES ARE ROUTINELY USED IN EVEN LARGE ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENTS.

2. FOR SEVERAL YEARS B&F MOSCOW COMPRISED FIVE US FS EMPLOYEES AND TWO CONTRACT SOVIET EMPLOYEES, A THIRD CONTRACT EMPLOYEE WAS ADDED IN 1973. ONE OF THE SOVIETS SPENT MOST OF HER TIME SPLITTING OUT OFFICIAL PHONE BILLS. WITH HEAVY AND CONTINUING WORKLOAD EXPANSION PRESSURES, THE RESULT WAS NEAR-DISASTROUS, WITH CHRONIC AND LENGTHY BACKLOGS IN BUDGET AND VOUCHER PREPARATION. TDY HELP BECAME ROUTINE FOR THE FBO BUDGET, ETC. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES IT IS CLEAR THAT NEARLY EVERY US EMPLOYEE IN B&F HAD TO DO A LARGE MEASURE OF THE VOUCHER PREPARATION, TYPING AND FILING WORKLOAD. IN THIS SENSE JOBS WERE DILUTED.

3. IN EARLY 1975 THE EMBASSY MADE STRENUOUS EFFORTS AND PRESSED THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT FOR MORE LOCAL EMPLOYEES AND, WHEN TOLD

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QUALIFIED ONES WRE HARD TO FIND REQUESTED THOSE WITH A WORK-

ING KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH AND NOT NECESSARILY ANY TRAINING IN BOOKKEEPING. BY THE END OF 1975, FOUR NEW CONTRACT EMPLOYEES HAD BEEN HIRED. NONE OF THE NEW EMPLOYEES HAD ANY ACCOUNTING EXPERIENCE. ALL OF COURSE HAVE POTENTIAL, ALTHOUGH IT IS CLEAR THAT 3 TO 5 YEARS WILL BE NECESSARY TO DEVELOP ONE OR TWO KEY LOCALS ABLE TO HANDLE INDEPENDENTLY THE ALLOTMENT ACCOUNTING AND BUDGET ASSISTANCE NOW ROUTINELY DONE BY LOCALS IN VIRTUALLY ALL OTHER EUROPEAN POSTS.

4. THE INTERNAL REORGANIZATION OF B&F, FOLLOWING THE INCREASE IN NON-FOREIGN SERVICE STAFF FROM 3 TO 7, ALLOCATED TO MRS. LEBLANC'S POSITION A FULL REGULAR WORKLOAD OF ALLOTMENT ACCOUNTING AND PROBLEMS IMMEDIATELY RELATED, INCLUDING FINANCIAL PLAN/BUDGET PREPARATION ASSISTANCE TO THE B&M OFFICER. PENDING LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENT SOVIET STAFF, WE WILL NEED TO STAFF THIS POSITION (AS WELL AS 53-2115-104) WITH RELATIVELY WELL-EXPERIENCED AND SUFFICIENTLY BROAD-GAUGED ANALYSTS TO HANDLE THE ALLOTMENT ACCOUNTING AS WELL AS BEING ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE TRAINING OF SOVIET EMPLOYEES. THE LEVEL OF RU-6, THEREFORE APPEARS APPROPRIATE AND IS NOT OUT OF LINE WITH THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THIS POSITION.

5. THE EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S RECONSIDERATION OF THIS REQUEST IN VIEW OF THE DIFFICULT AND UNUSUAL CONDITIONS PREVAILING IN MOSCOW.
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